

PROCESSED

JUL 07 1995

TULIPARY

A

Q

IRISH

BIBLICAL
STUDIES

IRISH BIBLICAL STUDIES

Editor:

Rev Professor J. C. McCullough
Union Theological College
26 College Green, Belfast BT7 1LN

Associate Editors:

Rev. Professor Ernest Best
13 Newmill Gdns
St. Andrews KT16 8RY

Rev. Professor E.A. Russell
Union Theological College
26 College Green, Belfast BT7 1LN

Assistant Editors:

Rev. Donald Ker
Rev. D.J. Templeton

Editorial Advisory Panel:

Rev. Dr. David Hill, 3 Ashdill Court, 26 Westbourn Rd., Sheffield
S10 2QQ.

Rev. Dr. W. S. Campbell, Westhill College, Selly Oak, Birmingham
29

Dr. J.G. McConville, Wycliffe Hall, Oxford OX2 6PW

Rev. Dr. R.J. McKelvey, 64 Brooklawn Drive, Withington,
Manchester M20 3GZ

Rev. Professor J.S. McIvor, Union Theological College, Belfast
BT7 1JT.

Rev. Martin O'Callaghan, Trench House, St Mary's College,
Belfast BT11

Professor E. Nicholson, Oriel College, Oxford.

Rev. Vincent Parkin, 37 Beechdene Gardens, Lisburn

Mr David Payne, 2 Westfield Ave., Watford, Herts. WD2 4EB

Professor Jacob Weingreen, Trinity College, Dublin 2.

Subscriptions

Individuals £8.00 Sterling or £8.50 Irish Punts

Institutions £13.00 Sterling or \$26.00 US

All subscriptions should be made payable to 'Irish Biblical Studies'
and addressed to the Editor.

ISSN 0268-6112

Copyright © IBS 1995

IRISH BIBLICAL STUDIES

Volume 17, April 1995

Contents

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|-------|
| J. C. O'Neill | 'Making himself equal with God' (John 5.17-18): The Alleged Challenge to Jewish Monotheism in the Fourth Gospel | 50-61 |
| Trevor J. Burke | The Characteristics of Paul's Adoptive Sonship (HUIOTHESIA) Motif | 62-74 |
| Lawrence Kirkpatrick | Baptism, Scripture, and the Problem of the Christian Sinner in Tertullian's <i>De Paenitentia</i> and <i>De Pudicitia</i> . | 75-85 |

Book Reviews

- David Daniell: *William Tyndale: A Biography*. (R. Buick Knox); David Butler, *Methodists and Papists, John Wesley and the Catholic Church in the Eighteenth Century* (Dennis Cooke); C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Apostles' Creed*. (Stephen N. Williams); Joel Marcus *The Way of the Lord* (Donald P. Ker); Martin Kitchen, *Ephesians* (New Testament Readings) (Ernest Best).
- 86-95

'MAKING HIMSELF EQUAL WITH GOD' (JOHN 5.17-18): THE ALLEGED CHALLENGE TO JEWISH MONOTHEISM IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Rev. Professor J.C. O'Neill

Professor Dunn and Dr Casey are united in putting around again the old story that John's Gospel marks a deep and irreconcilable break with Jewish monotheism. Dunn: "...it was precisely the language of pre-existence and conception of incarnation in reference to Jesus which was seen by Jewish opposition as a threat to the unity of God and so as the first real breach (perceived as such) with the Jewish monotheistic axiom."¹ Casey: "In the fourth Gospel, this final step of confessing the deity of Jesus is verifiable at the point where members of the Johannine community were thrown out of the synagogue... Jewish people who remained in the Jewish community could not hail Jesus as God because this would infringe Jewish monotheism."² Casey, while insisting that "'the Jews' ... were bound to perceive the [Johannine] community's faith as not monotheistic",³ does concede that the Johannine community "could perceive itself as having transformed Jewish belief" and

¹ James D.G. Dunn, "Why 'Incarnation'? A Review of Recent New Testament Scholarship", in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder*, edd. Stanley E. Porter, Paul Joyce and David E. Orton, (Leiden, Brill, 1994), pp. 235-256 at p. 253.

² P.M. Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God: The Origins and Development of New Testament Christology*. The Edward Cadbury Lectures at the University of Birmingham, 1985-86. (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co; Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 1991), p. 158.

³ Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, p. 37.

draws attention to a "subordinationist trend" (John 5.19,22-23,30).⁴

My purpose is to show that there is no good evidence in John's Gospel itself that Jesus' opponents thought that he was infringing Jewish monotheism. Jews who were excluded from the synagogue were excluded because they confessed that Jesus was the Messiah, not because they were seen to infringe monotheism, according to the gloss to John 9.22, and that late gloss is an accurate account of the matter at issue, although, as we shall see, there were excellent reasons, according to Jewish law, why the verdict seemed just.

I begin with the verses that are supposed to offer the greatest support to the argument I am questioning, John 5.17-18.

In John 5.18 we seem to have an explicit statement that Jesus had infringed Jewish monotheism. We must begin by asking to what extent the words of Jesus in John 5.17 justify the charge reported as having been made by "the Jews" in John 5.18 that Jesus had made himself equal with God. The charge does not obviously rest on the claim that God was his Father, although we must return to that claim later. The charge fairly clearly rests on the claim to act in the present hour, presumably an hour during the sabbath, because the Father had acted first up to this very hour on the sabbath. Jesus is justifying his action because it is following the action of the Father. The trouble is that his justification of the crime, if it be a crime, does not obviously fall under the criminal heading of making oneself equal with God. Of course Jesus is claiming God's authority for what he has done; he claims that he has acted as he did act because God acted in the same way first. But how does that make him equal with God? If anyone does a good deed which invites the rather superficial condemnation of their neighbours and they then justify that good deed, not only on the ground that God commanded the doing of that good deed but also on the ground that God suggested that good deed to their conscience and empowered them with the necessary courage and skill to do

⁴ Casey, *From Jewish Prophet to Gentile God*, pp. 37-38; see also pp. 23-25, 34-38, 156-159.

the good deed, how does that justification fall foul of the accusation that they are making themselves equal with God? Are they not being humble in acknowledging their dependence on God's grace and God's empowering? There is no contradiction between issuing the command, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" and following that command with the information that "it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil 2.12-13). Bultmann rightly points out, referring to Odeberg, that John 5.19, which emphasises the dependence of the Son on the Father, follows on happily from John 5.17. Bultmann nevertheless reads John 5.18 as showing a crass misunderstanding of John 5.17 on the side of "the Jews": "They are only able to understand being equal with God as being independent of God, while for Jesus being equal with God means just the opposite, as 5.19 immediately brings out."⁵ The trouble is that John 5.17 provides not the slightest basis for saying that Jesus claimed to be independent of God. The words in 5.17 are not the words of someone who complacently speaks as God and not man, who refuses to give God the glory (cf. Acts 12.21-23). On the contrary, in 5.17 Jesus ascribes all glory to the Father. John 5.17 does not obviously fall foul of the prohibition against making oneself equal with God, whatever that prohibition may mean.

Verse 17 contains the cause of another offence in the eyes of "the Jews" as reported in verse 18: the offence of saying that God was his own Father. Clearly John 5.17 provides good evidence that Jesus did do what he was charged with doing; by saying "my" Father he was plainly going beyond the limits of what any Jew could do who joined with his fellow-Jews in calling the Lord "My father" and in not turning away from him (Jer 3.19; cf. 3.4; Isa 63.16). Jesus must have been claiming to be the

⁵ Rudolf Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, Fascicle 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1938); English trans. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971); Odeberg, *The Fourth Gospel* (Uppsala, 1929), pp. 203-4.

special Son of the Father, the Messiah, as Bultmann sees.⁶ Bultmann thought that the very use of the term Son of God showed that the words came from the later Hellenistic Church and could not refer to controversies anchored in the time of Jesus⁷. We now have good evidence that "Son of God" was a contemporary title for the Messiah, based on 2 Sam 7.14 and Psalm 2 (4Q 246; 1QSa 2.11).⁸ But if "Son of God" was an accepted title for the Messiah, the use of the term in itself could

⁶ Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*.

⁷ Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, p.64 note 3; note to John 1.34.

⁸ See R.H. Eisenman and M.O.Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered: The First Complete Translation and Interpretation of 50 Key Documents Withheld for Over 35 Years* (Shaftesbury: Element, 1992), p.70; J.A. Fitzmyer, *A Wandering Aramean: Collected Aramaic Essays*, SBLMS 25 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1979), pp. 85-113; *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX*, AB (Garden City: Doubleday, 1981), 347-8; "4Q246: The 'Son of God' Document from Qumran", *Bib* 74 (1993), 153-174; É. Puech, "Fragment d'une Apocalypse en Araméen (4Q246 = pseudo-Dan) et le 'Royaume de Dieu'", *RB* 99 (1992), 98-131; J.J. Collins, "The *Son of God* Text from Qumran", in *From Jesus to John: Essays on Jesus and New Testament Christology in Honour of Marinus de Jonge* ed. M.C. De Boer, JSNTSup 84 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 65-82; Craig A. Evans, "The Recently Published Dead Sea Scrolls and the Historical Jesus", Appendix, *Studying the Historical Jesus: Evaluations of the State of Current Research*, ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans, New Testament Tools and Studies XIX (Leiden: Brill), pp.547-565 at pp. 549-551.

not be an offence. A Jew would be able to say without offence that no one knows the Father save the Son; this would be to affirm that the only way to approach God in true worship would be by turning to the Messiah as mediator of prayers and requests ("Kiss the Son [Aramaic] lest he be angry" [Ps 2.12]).

What can Jesus' offence in making God his own Father have consisted of? If the offence was not in employing the terminology, the offence must rest in the claim that God was his Father in this special sense and that he was the Messiah.

This conclusion is strengthened when we turn to two other passages in John's Gospel that employ similar terminology. In John 19.7 the Jewish authorities say to Pilate, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God". Once again, the charge cannot lie in the bare use of the terminology "Son of God", for that was acceptable as a way of describing the Messiah. The law in question must hinge on the self-ascription of the title. In John 19.21 the chief priests said to Pilate, "Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews". This is hardly a realistic scene, since Pilate no more than the highpriests thought that Jesus really was King of the Jews. It must be that the compiler of our narrative had a tradition that the charge against Jesus in the eyes of the Jewish authorities was that he had stated that he was the Son of God. This tradition has found an imaginative, but unreal, setting in a message to Pilate. The offence consisted in his having claimed in so many words to be King of the Jews or Messiah (for the Davidic Messiah is obviously a King).

If the charge that Jesus made God his own Father in the messianic sense hinged on the ascription of that honour to himself, what light does that conclusion throw on the meaning of the last clause, "making himself equal with God"? We are now in a position to see that Jesus is not being charged with being equal with God in all respects but with making himself equal with God in the one respect, in respect of claiming that he was the Messiah. That was a prerogative that the Father had reserved to himself. The Father, it was assumed, did have a Son, the Messiah. Human beings were allowed to speculate about whether John the Baptist or Jesus was that Messiah, but no

human being was allowed to say that he was himself the Messiah. To do so would be to usurp the Father's prerogative and to arrogate to oneself equality with the Father in a prohibited respect.

We may paraphrase John 5.18 as follows: "Therefore the Jewish authorities sought all the more to put him to death as an offender against the Law, not only because he broke the sabbath, a sign in a messianic pretender that he was an agent of the Man of Sin, despite all the positive things like healing that he did in parody of the true Messiah (2 Thess 2.3,9,10), but also because he claimed to be the Son of God by saying that God was his own Father, so making himself equal with God by doing what God had reserved for himself to do and would not allow to the Messiah." Just as no one knows and therefore no one may claim to speak with absolute authority of the day or of the hour of the coming judgment, not even the angels in heaven nor even the Son, so no one may claim to know and to speak with absolute authority about the identity of the Messiah, not even the angels in heaven nor even the Messiah himself (Matt 24.36; Mark 13.32). Prophets like John the Baptist and all lesser mortals may have a shot at identifying the Messiah from among possible candidates because they are always subject to the possibility that they are false prophets, and they also know that they could be wrong, but the Messiah would be arrogating such great power to himself if he were allowed to disclose what he knew, and the danger of imposters would be so high, that God has reserved the power to himself alone. This, at least, is the legal ruling that would explain the otherwise dark saying in John 5.18, and much else about the story of Jesus.

In John 10 Jesus is portrayed as making a statement that prompts his hearers to stone him for blasphemy. In 10.30 he says, "I and the Father are one". This statement is no more a claim to independence of God than John 5.17. It simply asserts the speaker's complete unity of purpose with the Father. This again is more than a general claim anyone who served God could make, and the explicit mention of The Father seems to imply that the speaker is The Son. The reference is possibly to Psalm 40.6, from a Psalm of David, read in a messianic sense (cf. Heb 10.9).

We are now in a position to know that the terminology was current in the days of Jesus where Son of God was a description of the Messiah. That means that the Jewish justification for the impulse to stone Jesus as a blasphemer cannot rest on the bare use of the terminology: anyone who was the Messiah would, ipso facto, be the Son of God. Yet they charge him with blasphemy on the grounds that "You, being a man, make yourself God" (John 10.33). What can that mean?

Jesus is next shown as accepting the charge that he has made himself God but as justifying himself on two grounds: that God himself called human beings "gods" (Ps 81.6-7) and that, if God has sanctified someone and sent him into the world, that person cannot be blaspheming to say, I am God's Son (John 10.34-36).

The first defence in John 10.34 must have originally been based on a messianic reading of Psalm 82: The Messiah who judges the gods is spoken of as "God". This meaning has been obscured by a gloss in 10.35 which tries to link 10.34 with 10.36. The words in 10.35, "If God so spoke to those (men in Psalm 81) to whom the word of God came", explicitly reads Psalm 86 in the quite traditional way as concerning the judgment of human beings in authority. The argument then becomes, If God can call lots of people "gods", what is blasphemous about anyone calling himself God? This argument is no defence, and neither Jesus' opponents nor Jesus himself could have thought it bore on the case in hand. The words that produce this nonsense (but serve to link 10.34 and 10.36) are omitted in the Syriac Sinaiticus and should be regarded as the failed attempt of a scribe to link up two originally distinct sayings. Note that the Chester Beatty Papyrus and Cyprian omit some of the words in question cited above.

Taken by itself, John 10.34 is a proof-text for the argument that the Son of God is rightly called "God". It does not bear more than indirectly on the matter in hand, which is whether or not Jesus made a claim that was blasphemous. A collector had 10.34 to hand, and inserted it where (in a very general sense) it belonged. The original argument was as follows. The Messiah will judge the nations, called "gods" in Psalm 82.6. But if the

speaker is the Messiah, that speaker is called "God" earlier in the Psalm: "God standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods". The messianic import of the psalm is made clear by the last verse: "Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations [according the messianic prophecy, Ps 2.8]." This exegesis of the Psalm might appear fantastic to us, did we not have a precisely similar use of the Psalm in 11QMelch. In line 10, David is said to have spoken about Melchizedek in the opening words of Psalm 82. Then in line 11 the words of Psalm 7.7b,8 are applied to Melchizedek: "Return thou on high; God shall judge the nations." Finally in line 18 he is called the Messiah of the Spirit.⁹ But, I repeat, the thoroughly Jewish argument of John 10.34 did not originally bear on the matter in hand, Jesus' defence against the charge of blasphemy. The argument proved that the Messiah could, according to scripture, be called "God", not that Jesus was committing blasphemy by calling himself the Messiah.

By removing the senseless gloss from the beginning of John 10.35, we are now in a position to take John 10.36 on its own. There are small signs here, too, that later scribes have tailored a saying more neatly into its present setting than was originally the case. Our texts read: "You [Jews] say that you [Jesus] blaspheme because I [Jesus] said, I am the Son of God". The less personal readings of "*he* blasphemes" (Tatian; Old Latin a b ff² l r) and "*he* said" (472) are more likely to be original. So we translate: "The one whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, you say that he blasphemes because he says, I am the Son of God" (John 10.36).

⁹ See J.A. Emerton, "Some New Testament Notes. 1. The interpretation of Psalm lxxxii in John x", *JTS* n.s. 11 (1960), 329-32; M. de Jonge and A.S. van der Woude, "11Q Melchizedek and the New Testament, *NTS* 12 (1965-66), 301-326 at 312-4; J.A. Emerton, "Melchizedek and the Gods: Fresh Evidence for the Jewish Background of John X. 34-36", *JTS* n.s. 17 (1966), 399-401.

This is a curious defence. Jesus as defendant assumes that the case against him is that he said, "I am the Son of God". As I have already argued, that is a plausible interpretation of the statement in 10.30, "I and the Father are one". Jesus then goes on to argue that the Jews are not justified in making this charge if the speaker is in fact the one sanctified and sent by the Father. We can see how this might have been an argument that appealed to the compiler of the Gospel, but it does nothing to meet the case here, because here the dispute is precisely over whether or not Jesus is truly sanctified and sent into the world by the Father. The charge against him must be that, because he has dared to say that he is the Messiah, he cannot be. I suppose the defence could be that the one truly sanctified and sent into the world by the Father can say what he likes; but then there would be little point in Jesus' bothering to offer any defence if he, by definition, could not be tried. Our earlier investigations have made it likely that the charge of saying in so many words that he was the Messiah was the Jewish charge of blasphemy which Jesus had to face. John 10.36 turns out to be an accurate statement of what Jesus was tried for, made by a believer in his status as the one sanctified and sent into the world by God. It can hardly have been part of Jesus' own defence against the charge of blasphemy.

John's Gospel, on close examination, does not offer any evidence that the bone of contention between Christians and Jews was the abstract issue of monotheism. The Gospel does state that Jesus was the Word of God incarnate, and that this Word was God. Jesus appears as making statements such as "Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8.58) and "I and the Father are one" (John 10.30), but the theology of God expressed by such statements is not the subject of dispute; the dispute is always about whether Jesus committed blasphemy by claiming to be the Son of God, the Messiah. Our defective knowledge of Judaism tricked us into thinking that the theology was something made up by the church, but we now know better and need to adjust our understanding of John's Gospel accordingly. John's Gospel shows us Jews disputing with one another about whether or not Jesus was the Messiah, but John's Gospel assumes that whoever is the Messiah would be called God's Son. would have existed

before Abraham did, would be at one with the Father, and could be called "Lord" and "God".

If the charge of blasphemy depended on the messianic claimant's saying "I am the Messiah", the Jesus of John's Gospel is guilty. However, ever since the pioneering work of Christian Hermann Weisse,¹⁰ we have known that the revelatory discourses in John's Gospel, from which the clear claims to be the Son of God are drawn, are not the words of the historical Jesus. The historical Jesus was curiously silent about whom he was, and Origen noted that even John's Gospel itself bears witness to that fact. In answering Celsus, Origen wrote, "We may also notice that it was a habit of Jesus everywhere to avoid speaking about himself. That is why he said: 'If I speak of myself, my witness is not true' (John 5.31). And since he avoided speaking about himself, and wanted to show that he was Christ rather by his deeds than by his talk, on this account the Jews say to him: 'If thou art the Christ tell us plainly' (John 10.24)."¹¹ Bultmann rightly saw the origin of the revelatory discourses as lying behind the birth of Jesus, but he nevertheless ascribes some revelatory sayings to the compiler of the Gospel. All attempts to distinguish stylistically between the work of the compiler and the revelatory discourse source have failed.¹² On the contrary, close

¹⁰ *Die Evangelienfrage in ihrem gegenwärtigen Stadium*, (Leipzig, 1856). He argued that John's Gospel was based on a similar historical foundation to the other Gospels, but it contained also a series of discourses from a source: John 1:1-5, 9-14, 16, 18; 3:13-21, 31-36; 5:19-27 minus part of 19:20 and the whole of 24. Since Jesus and John the Baptist and the Evangelist adopt the same style, this material is separate and distinctive.

¹¹ Origen, *Contra Celsum* 1.48, trans. H. Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 45.

¹² See Eugen Ruckstuhl, *Die literarische Einheit des Johannesevangeliums. Der gegenwärtige Stand der*

examination of the verses that are claimed to be the work of the evangelist as a creative theologian reveals that the alleged creative material is drawn from the ancient traditions. For example, John 3:31-36 is a series of revelatory statements, in the style of the Prologue and of discourses of Jesus, here ascribed to John the Baptist. That series of statements is only superficially related to the words of John the Baptist that are cited immediately before. Had the revelatory material of 3:31-36 been specially written by the alleged theologian, we should expect to find a close fit between text and commentary. On examination we cannot but observe that the spatial metaphor of John 3:30, "He must increase and I must decrease", which implies that John sees himself as the forerunner of the Messiah, is in no way related to the spatial imagery of John 3:31-36, where the one from above is opposed to the one from the earth: "He who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth is of the earth and speaks from the earth". This argues for a compiler, not a creative author; the compiler possessed traditions about John the Baptist and a superficially similar tradition, also using spatial imagery, about the opposition between the heavenly man and the man from the earth. He simply put them down, side by side. The compilers of the great "scenes" in John's Gospel (like the Woman at the Well, the Man Born Blind, the Raising of Lazarus) did not lack artistic ability, but it was artistic ability governed by the strict rule that the revelatory words, whatever their source, had to be respected as revelation and used as they stood.¹³² The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which contain more examples of the same sort of material, and

einschlägigen Forschungen, Studia Friburgensia, new series, 3 (Freiburg in der Schweiz: Paulus Verlag, 1951).

¹³ See J.C. O'Neill, "John 13.10 Again", *Revue Biblique* 101 (1994), where I argue that John 13.6-11 is made up of four sayings plus incidents that were originally independent of one another, and a comment.

the growing recognition that the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Syriac Odes of Solomon are almost totally free of Christian glosses and interpolations enable us to be more confident in ascribing the whole of the revelatory discourse material to Jewish sectaries before Jesus. The origin of much of the material must have been in the mystical experiences of men who went to lonely places, like John of Patmos, and saw the heavenly Son of Man sitting on his throne and saying things like, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last" (Rev 1:8; 21:6; 22:13).

John's Gospel assumes a living Jewish tradition in which the Messiah is God, alongside the Father, a tradition in no way challenging or affecting the fundamental dogma that "God is one". The disputes about blasphemy in that Gospel are not disputes about a supposed Christian threat to monotheism but are disputes about whether or not Jesus was guilty of the blasphemy of calling himself the Messiah. The curious conclusion to which we are driven is that, according to the text of the Gospel, he was guilty, but according to the historical records, some of which are preserved in the Gospel itself, he was not guilty, because he steadfastly refused to claim in so many words to be the Son of God.

J. C. O'Neill.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PAUL'S ADOPTIVE-SONSHIP (HUIOTHESIA) MOTIF

Trevor J. Burke

The relationship between God and his people has been variously understood and described by both Old and New Testament writers. Of all the biblical writers it is perhaps the apostle Paul who employs the richest vocabulary in describing how a person relates to God. For example he writes of justification, election, reconciliation, and redemption to name but a few forms of relationship. All of these weighty doctrinal terms have a rich background (both in the social setting in which Paul lived and also in the Old Testament in which Paul was steeped) that deepens the reader's awareness of how the apostle thought that Christians are related to God. The above ideas have been well documented¹⁴ and much research has been done.

However, a theme which has attracted little attention¹⁵ in the research literature, and one which is fundamental¹⁶ it

¹⁴ Today the doctrine of justification is at the centre of the Pauline debate. E.P. Sanders (*Paul and Palestinian Judaism* 1977) *et al* suggest that justification is more of a participational term than a juristic one (contra R. Gundry 'Grace, Works and Staying Saved in Paul' *Bib.* 66 1985 pp.1-38; also G.B. Caird Review of 'Paul and Palestinian Judaism' *JTS* 29 (1978), p.539-40.

¹⁵ This paucity of research into adoption is highlighted by T. Whaling's comment, 'A complete and well-rounded, and systematic presentation of the Biblical meaning of υιοθεσία, or of the theological significance of adoption is still a desideration' *Adoption PTR*, Vol. XXI No.2 April 1923, p.235. D.J. Theron also writes, 'In spite of its importance adoption has failed generally to gain much prominence in the great treatments of systematic and biblical theology. Its discussion frequently ended with an investigation of its relation to regeneration, justification, and sanctification. Consequently it was treated as a minor aspect of the way of salvation' "Adoption" in the Pauline Corpus' *EQ* Vol. XXXVIII No.1 Jan-Mar. 1956 p.8.

seems to Paul's understanding of what it means to be a Christian is that of υιοθεσία, 'adoptive-sonship'.¹⁷ The term is unique to the Pauline Corpus occurring five times in 3 different letters (ie. Gal.4:5; Rom.8:15;23; 9:4; Eph.1:5). There is no corresponding term in the Old Testament and it is missing from the LXX and Jewish literature of the period. Although the general idea of sonship is found in the Old Testament (eg. Ex.4:22; Deut.14:1-2; Is.63:16; Hos.11:1) this motif, adoptive-sonship, is not found anywhere else in the biblical literature.

The importance of adoption as a soteriological term has also been underestimated. It is not only a useful metaphor¹⁸ which Paul probably borrowed from the Roman legal system of his own day¹⁹ but it could be posited as an organising principle

¹⁶ J.I.Packer *Knowing God* p.224

¹⁷ There have been differences of opinion as to how best to translate the term υιοθεσία. B.Byrne suggests 'sonship' which hardly does justice to the meaning of adoption inherent in the term. B. Byrne, *Sons of God-Seed of Abraham: A Study of the Idea of the Sonship of God of all Christians against the Jewish Background*. *Analecta Biblica*, 83. Rome:Biblical Institute Press, 1979, p.79-80,110. James M. Scott demonstrates that Paul's *huiiothesia* term means 'adoption as son'. *Adoption as Sons of God:An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of in the Pauline Corpus* J.C.B.Mohr (P.Siebeck) Tübingen 1992 p.55. Byrne has since changed his mind and now prefers the compound form 'adoptive-sonship' 'Review of James M. Scott's *Adoption as Sons*' *JTS* April 1993 pp.288-294.

¹⁸ F. Lyall 'Roman Law in the Writings of Paul-Adoption', *JBL*, LXXXVII (1969), pp.456-468. cf. F.Lyall's *Slaves, Citizens, Sons:Legal Metaphors in the Epistles*. Grand Rapids:Zondervan, 1984.

¹⁹ Although the immediate background to the apostle's υιοθεσία motif is located in Roman law, (Greek law, albeit in a more fragmented and less absolute sense, also practiced adoption) the OT religious background of sonship (Ex.4:22; Deut.14:1-2;Is.63: 8; Hos.11:1) as opposed to adoption (adoption was not practiced by the Jews) needs to be taken into consideration. We suggest that neither the Roman legal

for understanding salvation²⁰ thereby making it as important as any other major soteriological term, eg. justification. What is more, adoption suitably links together and elucidates a number of biblical themes:

- Adoption finds its *origin* in *God* sending his *Son* (Gal.4:4; Rom.8:3) in order that we might receive the adoption as sons (Gal.4:5). Further, adoption is the work of the True God, Because you are sons, *God* sent the *Spirit of his Son* into our hearts the *Spirit* who cries out, 'Abba, Father' (Gal.4:6);
- Adoption underscores the *salvific* purpose of God in sending his Son which was, 'in order (ἵνα) to *redeem*....in order (ἵνα) that we might receive adoption as sons' (Gal.4:5);
- Adoption means that those who once were the children of wrath (Eph.2:3 RSV) have now been adopted as sons (Rom.8:15) into the *family* of God now able to address him as, 'Abba, Father' (Rom.8:15). Through his resurrection Christ is the Head of that new *family* since he was the first-born among many brothers (Rom.8:29). The family of believers is but one picture which Paul uses to describe the church (cf. Eph.3:14; cf. 1 Cor 12:12f. the body; 1 Cor.6:19 a temple etc);
- The evidence of being Spirit-led-sons-of-God (Rom.8:13) is shown by the Christian continually (θανατοῦτε, Rom.8:13) putting to death the misdeeds of the body. The *ethical* responsibility for God's sons to live circumspectly pervades Paul's thesis of adoption (cf. esp.Rom.8:12-17 and Eph.1:4f.);
- God's adopted sons, indeed the whole of creation (subhuman Rom.8:20 and human 8:23) await a glorious, *final*

background nor the OT religious background (let alone a single text cf. footnote 30) is sufficient to fully exhaust the whole background to the υιοθεσία term and that both need to be considered.

²⁰

S.B.Ferguson *The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship in Pulpit and People: Essays in Honour of William Still* eds. N.de S. Cameron and S.B.Ferguson Rutherford House 1986 pp.81-89.

emancipation when adoption will be complete. Paul writes, '...we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for (our) adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies' (Rom.8: 23).

In each of the above cases Paul's adoption motif brings together and enriches the biblical teaching in regard to the Triune-God, soteriology, ecclesiology, sanctification and eschatology which as this brief outline illustrates covers the whole spectrum of systematic/biblical theology. In the apostle's view to grasp these connections is important in order to arrive at a *full-orbed* picture of Pauline adoption.

Which is precisely where the problem lies. In the past it has been the quest for the most suitable background which Paul would have used in giving theological expression to his υιοθεσία motif that has been mostly the focus of scholarly attention. In the main the OT/Semitic ²¹ and Greek ²² and Roman ²³ socio-legal backgrounds have been posited.

Whilst the furrow of the *background* to this motif has been well ploughed other areas have been largely untouched. One area ²⁴ which could be further explored is that of the essential characteristics of the concept. For example, what kind of blessing is adoption thought to be? In the Christian view of the redemptive revelation of the purposes of God is adoption a gift of the present age or the aeon to come or both ie. is it an eschatological blessing? Second, how does it relate to the person

²¹ B.Byrne op.cit. and James M. Scott op.cit.

²² D.R.Moore-Crispin *The Source and Meaning of διαθήκη and Related Terminology in Gal.3:15-4:7* unpub. thesis London 1975.

²³ A.Mawhinney *Υιοθεσία in the Pauline Epistles:Its Background Use and Implications* Ph.D. dissert. Baylor Univ.1992

²⁴ There are other important aspects of Paul's υιοθεσία which could be developed namely. Adoption and Suffering (Rom.8:17-25). Adoption and the Spirit (Rom.8), Adoption and Prayer (Gal.4:6; Rom.8:15.26-27) and Adoption and Inheritance (Gal 4. and Rom.8) etc.

and work of Christ? Is adoption focussed in him ie. is it Christological?

1. Adoption; An Eschatological Blessing

The first thing to note in Gal.4 and Rom.8 where Paul's adoption motif is located is that the apostle deliberately discusses the term against the backcloth of the Torah, the Jewish Law.²⁵ Whereas the Law brought bondage (Gal.3:23 ;Rom.7:6) and death (Gal.3:21; Rom.7:10) the salvific purpose of God in sending his Son is to *redeem* (Gal.4:4) through him being a *sin offering* (Rom.8:3b) something the law could not do (ᾠδύνατον Rom.8:3). The sending of the Son (Gal.4:4; Rom.8:3) heralds the fact that the old era of the Law has been eclipsed by the new era of the eschatological Spirit (cf.Rom.7:6; 8:4b; Gal.3:1-5) and the blessing of adoptive-sonship (Gal.4:6; Rom.8:15). For Paul Jesus the Bringer of the End²⁶ has initiated a new beginning with the establishment of a new covenant in fulfillment of the Old Testament promises (eg. Is.11:1-10; 32:14-18; 42:1-4; 44:1-5; Ezk.11:17-20 and 36:26 which reads 'And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws'. That Paul was aware of the fact that the old covenant, written on tablets of stone, would be replaced by a new covenant written by the Spirit on people's hearts is clear from 2 Cor.3:3.

²⁵ The classic legalistic approach to Paul and the Law has been challenged by E.P.Sanders et al who maintain that the law was never kept in order to merit salvation but to maintain an already existing covenantal relationship with God. However, Sanders's thesis of 'covenantal nomism' may still leave room for salvation to be acquired by works (cf. R.Gundry op.cit.) R.N.Longenecker also suggests that Judaism featured two possible tendencies - 'acting nomism' and 'reacting legalism' Paul, *Apostle of Liberty* 1964 pp. 65-85. For an excellent criticism of E. P.Sanders *et al* and a robust defence of the traditional understanding of justification by faith cf. M. A. Seiford. *Justification by Faith: The Origin and Development of a Central Pauline Theme* (NovT Supp 68; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992)

²⁶ J. Ziesler *Pauline Christianity* OUP 1990 Rep.p.28.

The presence of the Spirit who would create a new race and people to inherit the divine promises is an essential dogma of Pauline theology.²⁷

Whereas the noun νόμος dominates the landscape in Romans 7²⁸ (and Gal.3) this is now replaced in Romans 8 by an emphasis upon the πνεῦμα which is mentioned here in this chapter twenty-one times (out of a total of twenty-eight times in the epistle). This is more frequent than in any other New Testament passage. There is not, as Bornkamm²⁹ notes, a single imperative. Similarly after Gal.4:6f. the noun πνεῦμα occurs 14 times. Perhaps it is significant that whereas in Rom.7 the apostle was dealing with the Law (ie. the COMMANDments), now in chapter 8 that the Spirit is in view the Christian has a new freedom and energy to live as God intended. This is because the life in the Spirit is controlled and lived out not by an external regulatory code (cf.7:6) but through the indwelling power of the Spirit (8:4,9).

Even though Rom.8 is dominated by the Spirit (the Spirit's *work* is in view not his person) Paul is careful to show the relationship of justification and the gift of the Spirit to the Christ-event and goes on to relate this to his υιοθεσία motif. He does so for a purpose. At the beginning of Rom.8 Paul presents a summary statement in the light of the context of justification by faith. He writes, 'Therefore there is now (vōv) no condemnation to those who are *in Christ Jesus*'. The immediate linguistic link is with Rom.5:18 (κατάκριμα) but this summary also brings to mind a similar note sounded earlier, and at a crucial turning-point, in Rom.3:21, 'But now (vōv) a righteousness from God ...has been revealed. This righteousness from God comes through

²⁷ L. Cerfaux *The Christian in the Theology of Paul* p.262.

²⁸ K. Stendahl points out that In Rom.7, 'Paul is.....involved in an interpretation of the Law, a defense for the holiness and goodness of the Law' *Paul Among Jews and Gentiles Philadelphia*. 1976, p.92. Significantly, the noun νόμος occurs (mostly in the sense of the Mosaic Law) 72 times in Romans and 32 in Galatians out of a total of 119 occurrences in the Pauline Corpus.

²⁹ G. Bornkamm *Paul* ET 1970 p.156.

faith in Jesus Christ'. In both cases the $\nu\omicron\nu$ is not merely logical but eschatological³⁰ in that the revelation of Christ (ie. the Christ-event) is "the dawning-time of salvation".³¹ The revelation of Christ means 'no condemnation' ($\nu 1$) a juridical pronouncement³² evidenced by the fact that the Christian is delivered from the lordship of sin ($\nu 2a$) a freedom grounded in the sacrifice of Christ for sins ($\nu 3$). This anticipates the final judgement (eg. Rom. 5:9) and is hence an 'eschatological' state of affairs.

Traditionally, Jewish eschatology has understood life as consisting of two ages: the present evil age and the age to come. The former would be followed by the Judgement which would usher in the blessed Messianic age to come. But for Paul the eschatological process has *already* begun, is already realised, because of the advent, death and resurrection of Christ. The one who was to come *is* come in the person of Christ through whom the Messianic age has broken in upon us. In other words, the eschaton, the last decisive act of God through the Christ-event, has taken place. This 'already' aspect to Paul's theology was what distinguished him from his Jewish contemporaries for whom the messianic age lay wholly in the future.

Significantly it is within this eschatological framework that Paul goes on to link justification with the life in the Spirit. All who are 'in Christ' are also said to be 'in the Spirit' ($\epsilon\nu\ \pi\nu\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha\tau\iota$ ³³ Rom. 8:9) another 'eschatological' condition,

³⁰ This eschatological perspective has long been considered important for Paul's theology and is one of the main areas of contemporary scholarly debate. A. Lincoln insists, '...that the coherent core of Paul's thought which comes to different expression in a variety of settings, is his eschatology which centres in Christ and that this is fundamental to the rest of his thinking including his thinking about justification' *Ephesians* WBC 42; 1992 p.lxxxix.

³¹ H. Ridderbos *Paul: An Outline of his Theology* SPCK 1975 p.162

³² R. Gundry *op.cit.*, pp.28f

³³ Deismann on the basis of 2 Cor. 3:17 identifies Christ and the Spirit (cf. Paul: *A Study in Social and Religious History*

because the gift and out-pouring of the Spirit is an end-time event (eg. Joel 2:28-32) and here regarded by the apostle as the ἀπαρχή 'first-fruits' (8:23) of the consummation of adoption. The gift of the Spirit in the present is to be understood as the beginning (the first-fruits) of the eschatological harvest. The Spirit is the first sheaf³⁴ which is a promise and a guarantee of the harvest of the End. The presence of the Spirit within is presented here in terms of proleptic eschatology. Elsewhere Paul speaks of the Spirit as the down-payment or first-instalment guaranteeing the completion of the inheritance (cf. Eph.1:14). Of the Spirit Hamilton writes, 'Essentially, the Spirit is the ground of the eschatological life of the future, (and)...belongs primarily to the future'.³⁵

Given the fact that these different motifs are eschatological gifts, would it not then be reasonable to suppose that the adoption motif itself is an eschatological blessing, since Paul connects it with the gift of the Spirit for all those 'in Christ' who are justified? Indeed, both in Gal.4:4 and Rom.8:3 Paul links adoption with the *sending* of the Son. That adoption is an aspect of the redemptive-historical purposes of God is made clear by the apostle in Gal.4:4 when he writes, 'When the time had fully arrived (ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου) God sent his Son..... that (ἵνα) we might receive the υἰοθεσίᾱ'. The phrase 'When the time had fully arrived' does not mean that time ripened of its own accord or even that it was the time of man's greatest need. Rather the revelation of God's Son brought the 'fullness of time'.³⁶ The hour of God's final disclosure, the sending of his Son and the coming of faith (Gal.3:25,26) signals the inauguration of adoptive-sonship. Paul makes this 'already' aspect clear in Rom.8:14, 'All those who are led by the Spirit are (εἰσιν) the sons of God' and v16 'The Spirit witnesses with our Spirit that we are (ἐσμεν) the children of God'. Adoption for

1926) but see E. Best's distinction between 'in Christ' and 'in the Spirit' *One Body in Christ* p.11f.

³⁴ R. de Vaux *Ancient Israel* ET Darton 1965 pp.490f.

³⁵ N.Q.Hamilton *The Holy Spirit and Eschatology in Paul* SJT Ocas. Papers No.6 1957 p.20.

³⁶ G.Bornkamm op.cit., p. 199.

Paul is 'now' but he holds this in tension with the eschatological 'not-yet' - it has yet to be fully consummated. It is real but it is not the whole as the apostle states in Rom.8:23 'We ourselves who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for (our) adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies'. The goal of adoption is 'conformity to the εἰκὼν of of his Son' (Rom.8:29) a point to which we shall return.

2. Adoption: The Christological Focus

Another characteristic of Paul's υἱοθεσία motif is the pervasive Christological emphasis. The *revelation* of Christ in the sense of his mission (Gal.4:4; Rom.8:3) is one aspect of Jesus' role in executing God's final judgement. In both the above passages Paul links Christ's sonship with that of the Christian's (Gal.4:6; Rom.8:15) and in doing so strikes an important Christological note - the Christian's sonship is derived from or is dependent³⁷ upon Christ's. Christ's sonship makes possible sonship for those who have faith and are united with him. Significantly for Paul Jesus' sonship is unique: this is underscored by the fact that he frequently employs the definite article when referring to Jesus as the Son of God (Rom.1:4; 2 Cor.1:19; Gal.2:20). This point is further strengthened when the apostle chooses to describe Jesus as *his* (God's) *own Son* (Rom.8:3) and as *his* Son (Gal.4:4).

That the Christian's sonship depends on Christ's is a note struck in Gal.4:4, 'God sent his Son...in order (ἵνα) that we might receive the adoption as sons'. A similar Christological point is made in Gal.3:26, 'You are all sons of God through faith *in Christ*' (cf. the number of prepositional phrases in Gal.3:26-28 (v26 ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ), v27 εἰς Χριστὸν) and v28 (ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ). This faith-union with Christ is fundamental to Paul's soteriology where God's people are understood to have died, been buried and raised with Christ (cf. Rom.6:1-4). Here incorporation into Christ (the Son) through faith enables all (Jews and Gentiles) to become sons and daughters of God. Indeed the thrust of Paul's argument in Gal.3-4 can be

³⁷

J.D.G.Dunn *Jesus and the Spirit* SCM 1975 p.25

understood as a Christocentric (and Christological) (re)-interpretation of the Abrahamic covenant³⁸ (3:16 being a pivotal verse) where the priority for Paul's readers is firstly to become sons of God through faith in Christ, the Son, thereby also qualifying them to be the seed of Abraham (i.e. Sons of God-Seed of Abraham)³⁹. Christ, the Son is crucial to Paul's argument in that his relationship as God's Son opens up the way for believers to become adopted sons where the scope of blessing is more far-reaching than normal Jewish expectations - Gentiles are included as well, 'You are *all* (πάντες is emphatic) sons of God through faith in Christ' (3:26). The order is crucial here as Paul insists, 'If you belong to Christ (the Son) *then* you are Abraham's seed' (Gal.3:29).

As stated previously the revelation of God's Son is an important Christological plank in Paul's eschatological framework but the central feature of Pauline eschatology turns on the question of *the climactic resurrection of Christ* which sets in motion the future resurrection of the dead. Through Christ the resurrection age has burst upon us.⁴⁰ It has recently been argued that Christ's resurrection from the dead was his 'adoption', *not* in an adoptionist sense (ie. that he *became* the Son of God at the resurrection)⁴¹ but in the sense that 'he was marked out as the-Son-of-God-in-power through the resurrection' (Rom.1:4). Paul seldom mentions Jesus' messiahship in the sense of him being the Son of David but he certainly believes in such a designation.⁴² In Rom.1:3f the apostle recognises Christ's Davidic descent (2 Sam.7:14)⁴³ but

³⁸ G.W.Hansen, *Abraham in Galatians:Epistolary and Rhetorical Contexts* (JSNTSup 29; Sheffield Academic Press 1989 p.99.

³⁹ B. Byrne op.cit., pp.79-80,110.

⁴⁰ A. Nygren *Romans* p.50.

⁴¹ R.B. Gaffin *The Centrality of the Resurrection*. Grand Rapids 1978, pp.117-119. James M.Scott op.cit., pp.239-242.

⁴² J. Ziesler op.cit., p.29.

⁴³ Scott takes this one text as the *sole* background to Paul's adoption motif but as Byrne points out, '2 Sam.7:14...cannot

here the contrast is not between his two natures (ie. human and divine) but between two states ie. earthly and heavenly ⁴⁴ Whereas before the resurrection Christ was the Son-of-God-in-weakness afterwards he was the Son-of-God-in-power. The resurrection of Christ means that he is the first-born (the prototype, πρωτότοκος Rom.8:29) among many brothers and the Head of the Family of the new age who opens up the way for other members of God's family to be added and in doing so 'brings many sons to glory' (Heb.2:10). Christ's resurrection is the first-fruits from the dead (1 Cor.15:20, 23) and the pattern of the new eschatological race of people who through union with him are 'raised to newness of life' and adopted into that same family.

The pattern of Christ's sonship for the Christian is further underscored in that the address 'Abba, Father' employed by Jesus on the eve of the paschal event (Mk.14:36) itself is not selfishly kept for himself. On the contrary, it is shared and the adopted son is enabled to communicate with God using the same language Jesus used when addressing God as his abba (Gal.4:5; Rom.8:15).

Adam-Christology

If we probe more deeply in Rom.8:18-23 this Christological focus (this time Adam-Christology) is continued.

be isolated (cf. Jub.1:24; Pss Sol.17:30) from a broader divine sonship pattern that is comparatively widespread in the Old Testament and Jewish tradition (eg. Ex.4:22; Deut.14:1-2; 32:5-6; Is.1:2-4; 30:9; 63:8, 16.... Sir.36:17; 1 Enoch 62:11.... Above all one thinks of the notable prominence of divine sonship in the Wisdom of Solomon 2:13, 16, 18; 5:5; 9:7; 22:7, 20; 16:10, 21, 26; 18:13; 19:6). 'Review *Adoption as Sons of God*', *JST* April 1993 pp.288-294. Others eg. L.Allen regard Ps.2:7 as a background to Rom.1:3-4 cf. 'The Old Testament Background of (IIPO) 'OPIZEIN in the NT' *NTS* 17 (1970-71) pp.104-108.

⁴⁴

D. Moo 'Romans' in *New Bible Commentary (A Commentary for the Twenty-First Century)* eds. D.A.Carson et al 1994 p.1139.

In these verses Paul is describing the period between the 'now' (8:14,16) and the 'not-yet' (v23) of adoption which is characterised by the suffering of the whole of creation (subhuman, v21 and human, v23) right up to the present time (v22). The subjection of creation to futility is brought about by divine involvement but it is a subjection *in hope* (v21 cf. also vv24-25). Although Paul does not mention the fall here it is quite clear from this passage that although God is behind the plan, nevertheless, according to Gen.3:17, Adam, because of his sin, is responsible for the implications and effects of his actions upon himself and the rest of creation. Thus, in Rom.8:17-25 there is, 'probably a deliberate harking back to the description of Adam's/man's fallenness in Rom.1'.⁴⁵ If Rom.1:18-32 has an underlying Adam motif⁴⁶ could we not posit the same kind of argument for Rom.8:17-25?

Dunn underscores the linguistic link between Rom.8 and Rom.1:18-32 which would appear to strengthen the argument. For example, just as in Adam's case, creation became futile and empty (1:21 - ματαιώω; 8:20 - ματαιότης); like Adam creation is in bondage to corruption and decay (1:23 - φθαρτός 8:21 - φθορά). The whole of creation has been subjected to futility as a result of Adam's sin. Solidarity with the first Adam, the son of God (Lk.3:38) means to bear his fallen image (1 Cor.15: :49a), to share his corruptibility (1 Cor.15:22) and to fall short of the glory of God (Rom.3:23). But solidarity with the Second Adam, the Son of God, means salvation (ie. the consummation of adoption), restoration of the believer to glory (cf. Rom.8:17-23) with a share in his (the Sons's) glory (Rom.8:17), and more importantly for adopted sons, conformity to the image of the

⁴⁵ J.D.G. Dunn *Christology in the Making* SCM 1980 p.104

⁴⁶ M.D. Hooker ('Adam in Rom.1' *NTS* 6 (1960) pp.297-306) and C.K. Barrett (*From First Adam to Last* A & C Black, 1962, pp.17-19) see an Adamic motif underlying Rom. 1:18-32 where the language used is an echo of that found in Gen.1:20-26. Hooker writes, 'Paul's account of man's wickedness (in Rom.1:18-32) has been *deliberately* stated in terms of the Biblical narrative of Adam's fall'. (italics mine).

glorified Son (Rom.8:29)⁴⁷ The Christological point being made is an important one as far as Paul's thesis of adoptive-sonship is concerned - Christ, the Son (Rom.8:29), who is the 'image of God' (2 Cor.4:4) in his Adamic role reverses the entire consequences of the fall and in doing so brings adopted sons to glory whose image has been conformed to that of himself. If, according to Paul, Christ's sonship is the basis for the Christian's sonship he would seem to be suggesting that *such a filial disposition is impossible apart from Christ*.

We suggest in conclusion that the *characteristics* of Paul's υιοθεσία motif are both Christological and eschatological. It is perhaps best described as a Christological blessing that pertains most closely to that of the last days.

Trevor J. Burke.

⁴⁷ S. Kim sees Christ's Sonship, image and glory as all revealed to the apostle in the Damascus Road Christophany and that, 'it was by seeing the risen and exalted Christ as the Son and image of God who has restored the divine image and glory lost by Adam that Paul developed his soteriological conception of the believer's being adopted as sons of God, their being transformed into the glorious image of Christ...the Last Adam..' *The Origin of Paul's Gospel* Tübingen 1980, p.332.

BAPTISM, SCRIPTURE, AND THE PROBLEM OF THE CHRISTIAN SINNER IN TERTULLIAN'S *DE PAENITENTIA* AND *DE PUDICITIA*.

Rev. L. S. Kirkpatrick.

INTRODUCTION.

The contribution of the North African Church to early Christian literature and theology was second to none. Even the famous Church of Rome did not compare. There is ample evidence in the writings of Tertullian, Cyprian, Arnobius, Lactantius and Augustine of the struggles of this Church against paganism without and heresy and schism within. By far the most noteworthy ante-Nicene African writer was Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus. It was he who first coined the aphorism *Semen est sanguis Christianorum* (*Apologeticum*) 50.13.) Born in Carthage around A.D.155 Tertullian initially practised law at Rome. He was converted about A.D.190-95 and returned to his native city. In A.D.197 he began a career as a Christian apologist and his thirty or so extant writings are an invaluable source for many developments in this period. About A.D.207 he left the Catholic Church and joined the Montanists. He later became leader of his own group, 'the Tertullianists', who survived in Carthage into the fifth century. The year of his death is unknown but certainly occurred after A.D.220.

With the exception of his fellow African Augustine, Tertullian is the most important Latin author in the entire patristic period. He is often dubbed, 'the Father of Latin Theology', and his literary output in this realm was certainly prodigious. His contribution to the doctrines of the Trinity, the humanity of Christ, and the nature of man are particularly celebrated. However, I wish to restrict the parameters of this paper to a consideration of Tertullian's thought in relation to the problem of the Christian sinner. He clearly shifted his opinion on the question of the Church's power to forgive serious post-baptismal sin. Why did he do so and how did he do so? It is with particular reference to Tertullian's use of Scripture that I

wish in this paper to examine the evolution of his appraisal of the problem of the Christian sinner.

There are two main primary sources in which Tertullian addressed this subject;

a) *De paenitentia* (On Repentance) consists of 12 chapters and was composed in A.D.203 when Tertullian was still a member of the Catholic Church. In chapters 4-6 he deals with the necessary repentance required in any adult seeking baptism, and in chapter 7 with a 'second repentance' available to all Christians who fall into serious post-baptismal sin.

b) *De pudicitia* (On Modesty) consists of 22 chapters and is a later composition, written when Tertullian had become a Montanist. This is a rigorist and polemical work against the Catholic penitential system. According to chapter 1 Tertullian feels compelled to write because of the recent edict of an unnamed *Pontifex Maximus* in which forgiveness for sins of adultery and fornication had been proclaimed.

In exploring Tertullian's thought it will be convenient to proceed under three main headings: baptism, exomologesis, and rigorism.

1. BAPTISM.

From earliest post-apostolic times the indispensability of baptism was assumed by virtually all Christians (see for example, *Didache* 7.) The foundational scriptural text was, 'Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God', (John 3:5.) The universally accepted interpretation of this 'water' was that it referred to the water of baptism. Personal salvation was inextricably linked with personal baptism and Tertullian's *De baptismo* has the distinction of being the earliest extant patristic treatise on this sacrament. However it is in his longest work, *Adversus Marcionem*, that Tertullian indicates the four basic gifts believed to be conveyed in baptism (*Adversus Marcionem* 1.28.) These are: the remission of sins, deliverance from death, regeneration, and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Although Tertullian wrote this when a Montanist, there is no reason to suppose other than that

he is here succinctly summarising the generally accepted beliefs concerning baptism at that time.

Tertullian is adamant that baptism is essential for salvation. He wrote *De baptismo* against a certain Carthaginian lady, Quintilla, who had dared to question this premise. In response to her observation that Jesus' disciples were not baptised, Tertullian points out that they were already apostles before Christ issued his declaration to *Nicodemus* (*De baptismo* 13.) Tertullian refused to follow an interpretation evidently current at that time explaining the disciples' baptism as having occurred when a storm on Galilee forced water into their boat (Matthew 8.21; *De baptismo* 12.) To a large extent Tertullian seems to have equated John's baptism with Christian baptism. He asserts that as the disciples had already received the former they could not therefore receive the latter.

Flowing from his interpretation of John 3.5., Tertullian believed that the Holy Spirit was actually present with baptismal candidates in the water. As an angel was believed to disturb the water at Bethsaida in the days of Christ (John 5.4.) so, he argued, an angel prepared the baptismal water for the Holy Spirit. 'Not that in the waters we receive the Holy Spirit; but in the water, under (the influence of) the angel, we are cleansed and (thus) prepared for the Holy Spirit' (*De baptismo* 6.) In several of his treatises Tertullian furnishes us with many interesting details as to how a baptism was performed at that time. Candidates were prepared by prayers, fasting and vigils (*De baptismo* 20.) They publicly renounced the devil and his angels (*De spectaculis* 4; *De idolatria* 6), before three immersions in water in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (*Adversus Praxean* 26.) On emerging from the water they were given milk and honey (*Adversus Marcionem* 1.1), anointed with oil (*De baptism* 7), and given the sign of the cross (*De resurrectione carnis* 8.) This anointing was a possible allusion to the Old Testament anointing of priests, as all believers are priests in Christ. The rite was completed by laying on of hands in accordance with Jacob's blessing upon Joseph's sons where Jacob crossed his arms, thereby making the shape of a cross (Genesis 48; *De baptismo* 8.)

The question of martyrdom provides an interesting addendum to Tertullian's doctrine of baptism. He referred to martyrdom as *secundum lavacrum* (*De patientia* 13.) In his mind, and that of many third-century Christians, martyrdom was clearly linked with baptism. Tertullian employed two key texts in support of this link. Firstly, Jesus had declared, 'I have a baptism to undergo' (Luke 12.50; *De baptismo* 16.) He had said this after receiving John's baptism and prior to his crucifixion. What else could Jesus have been referring to by this forthcoming baptism other than his own death? The crucifixion was of course the supreme example of martyrdom. The second key text is John 19.34 where we read that both water and blood issued from Christ's wound as he hung on the cross (*De baptismo* 16.) What else could this incident symbolise other than the 'two baptisms'? 'The blood' of this text was the martyr blood of God's Son and the 'water', which must refer to baptism, must obviously teach that martyrdom and baptism are closely linked. In subsequent patristic baptismal controversies, almost any scriptural reference to 'water' was interpreted as referring to some aspect of the sacrament of baptism.

From the tone of all that he wrote concerning baptism it is obvious that for Tertullian no heretic could, by definition, possess the Spirit. Referring to heretics and their sacrament he wrote, 'I am not bound to recognise in them a thing which is enjoined on me, because they and we have not the same God, nor one - that is, the same - Christ: and therefore their baptism is not one (with ours) either, because it is not the same'. (*De baptismo* 15.) This proved an awkward conclusion in relation to subsequent North African Church history. About A.D.200 a Carthaginian Council, comprising around seventy African bishops under the leadership of Agrippinus, confirmed the authentic North African position to be a requirement of 're-baptism' for those who had received schismatic or heretical baptism. (Of course in the eyes of the North Africans this was not actually a 're-baptism' but rather a first and only valid baptism.) Thus the seeds were sown for the later Cyprian/Stephen and Catholic/Donatist conflicts on this very issue.

2. EXOMOLOGESIS.

With hindsight, such a high understanding of the significance of baptism inevitably gave rise to problems within the Early Church, and specifically, the problem of the Christian sinner. How ought post-baptismal sin to be regarded? How should such sins be dealt with in the Church? Scripture appeared to be ambiguous on this matter. In the New Testament John writes that the sins of a Christian can be forgiven upon confession (1 John 1.9.) Later in this same letter John seems to indicate that there is a more serious class of sin, 'There is a sin that leads to death' (1 John 5.16.) Christian opinion on the subject of post-baptismal sin and how to deal with it was evidently still evolving in the early third-century. There had been a debate in the Roman congregation in the mid-second century as demonstrated in the Shepherd of Hermas. While acknowledging that those who are baptised ought to 'sin no more', Hermas holds out the offer of a once only forgiveness of sins after baptism. 'If a man should be tempted by the devil and sin, he has one repentance' (Mandate 4.3.1-6.) Such teaching permitted both the seriousness of sin and the mercy of God to be held together in some tension. Neither slackness nor austerity prevailed.

The post-baptismal wound was re-opened by Tertullian with devastating consequences. His own view clearly hardened in that he came to adopt a rigorist position on this question. Initially though, in his treatise *De paenitentia*, which he composed about A.D.203, Tertullian enthusiastically supported a concept known as ἐξομολόγησις. This term (meaning literally, 'utter confession') describes one of the earliest mechanisms designed to grapple with serious Christian sin. Briefly, it involved an ongoing process of public confession of serious post-baptismal sin and the undertaking of specified disciplinary acts and self-humiliation. Confession was made publicly to bishop and congregation. Penitents were often required to wear sackcloth and ashes and were suspended from participation in the eucharist. Fasting, prayers, and almsgiving were common elements of this process which could last for days, weeks or even years depending upon the severity of the sins committed.

‘Exomologesis, then, is a discipline which leads a man to prostrate and humble himself. It prescribes a way of life which, even in the matter of food and clothing, appeals to pity’ (*De paenitentia* 9.) The theory behind this process was obviously that an individual could demonstrate the genuine depth of his or her repentance and thereby attract the mercy of God. Tertullian berates those who refuse to submit to this process. ‘Yet most men either shun this work, as being a public exposure of themselves, or else defer it from day to day. I presume (they do so as being) more mindful of modesty than salvation; just like men who, having contracted some malady in the more private parts of the body, avoid the privity of physicians, and so perish with their own bashfulness’ (*De paenitentia* 10.) Thus ἐξομολόγησις seems to have been a clumsy yet straightforward piece of ecclesiastical machinery which developed in response to the uncomfortable fact that not all Christians live a life free of sin after their baptism.

Tertullian advanced three main scriptural proofs in favour of ἐξομολόγησις. He cites the experience of Nebuchadnezzar, driven from his throne and living like an animal for seven years, whereupon renouncing his sins he was forgiven and restored to his throne. ‘Long time had he (Nebuchadnezzar) offered to the Lord his repentance, working out his ἐξομολόγησις by a seven years’ squalor, with his nails wildly growing after the eagles fashion, and his unkempt hair wearing the shagginess of a lion’ (Daniel 4.25f; *De paenitentia* 12.) Secondly, as an example of the serious consequences which follow from refusal to submit to this process, the Pharaoh who rejected numerous opportunities to repent before God in the days of Moses and release the children of Israel, was drowned. This is a salutary lesson to us all (Exodus 14.15f; *De paenitentia* 12.) Thirdly, and somewhat less clearly, Tertullian cites Adam who was ‘restored by ἐξομολόγησις to his own paradise’ (Genesis 3.24; *De paenitentia* 12.) In addition to these examples, had not Christ Himself noted the sins of the Christians in Ephesus, Thyatira, Sardis, Pergamum, and Laodicea and asked each to repent? (Revelation 2-3; *De paenitentia* 8.) The principle is

clearly established as scriptural that Christian sin, even serious post-baptismal sin, can be forgiven within the Church.

Tertullian made a number of points regarding the use of 'utter confession'. It was of no benefit to those who abused it, that is to those who afterwards returned easily to their sins. It was no blank chequebook for Christian sinners but operated only where true repentance was exhibited. Tertullian is also adamant that it can only be used 'once for all' (*De paenitentia* 7.) The process was not as cumbersome as it might at first seem to the modern eye. It was judged to be appropriate only for the most serious sins. Lesser sins could be forgiven by a simple act of confession which secured immediate restoration. Significantly, in *De paenitentia* Tertullian places no restriction upon the power of ἐξομολόγησις. As the sacrament of baptism secured complete cleansing from all previous sin, so this process operated as a 'safety net', enabling the Christian sinner to once again obtain complete cleansing. No post-baptismal sin was so serious as to be irremissible.

3. RIGORISM.

It soon became apparent that within the Church itself opinions still varied as to the status of serious post-baptismal sin. There was no universal agreement that a 'second repentance' was open to all. Tertullian himself demonstrates these opposing opinions. While in *De paenitentia* he sees no limit on the power of the Church to forgive all post-baptismal sin, in the later treatise, *De pudicitia*, he espoused a more rigorist line, arguing that the Church had no power to forgive certain serious sins. Two scriptural texts in particular were employed by Tertullian to establish the fact that a line must be drawn between less serious venial and more serious mortal sins. When Jesus breathed upon his disciples, thus imparting the Holy Spirit, he said; 'If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven' (John 20.23; *De pudicitia* 21.) The latter part of this text is interpreted as referring to the more serious mortal sins. Similarly, in his first letter, John distinguishes between sins which lead to death and sins which do not. (1 John 5.16; *De pudicitia* 19.) In *De*

pu-dic-itia Tertullian states clearly that the Church possesses neither the power nor the authority to forgive mortal sins. He distinguishes between *peccatum remissibile* and *peccatum irremissibile*. But what specific sins constitute mortal sins and how are they to be identified?

In its traditional form, the rigorist definition of mortal sin was threefold, (idolatry, adultery and murder), and Tertullian's *De pu-dic-itia* is the oldest extant source to supply this threefold definition. He informs us in the first chapter of this treatise that it was composed in response to a certain *Pontifex Maximus* who had issued a recent edict declaring his willingness to pronounce forgiveness for those guilty of adultery (*Ego et moechiae et fornicationis delicta paenitentia functis dimitto.*) Tertullian, who would have accepted this edict in A.D.203 when he wrote *De paenitentia*, has now hardened his view and will not allow the Church power on earth to forgive such mortal sins. The ensuing ecclesiological debate featured two sides, laxist and rigorist. In short, Tertullian abandoned laxism and embraced rigorism.

It has often been asserted by scholars that Tertullian and other rigorists represent an older view, the assumption being that the rigorists were arguing against what they perceived to be falling Christian standards in their own generation. According to this theory, what were formerly regarded as unforgivable sins, like adultery, were now becoming more common and in consequence the Church assumed the power to pronounce forgiveness in such cases. It can equally be argued though that the opposite is the case, that in fact the rigorists were attempting to introduce new and higher standards in this realm of post-baptismal sin. In all probability there was a variety of opinions on these matters from earliest times in the Church. The writer to the Hebrews, for example, argued a rigorist line (see Hebrews 6.4-6; 10.26-31.) Not surprisingly Tertullian quotes approvingly from this epistle, which he attributed to Barnabas, as a preferable authority to that of 'the apochraphal "Shepherd" of adulterers' (*De pu-dic-itia* 20.) For Tertullian the Montanist there is no 'second repentance' for adulterers and fornicators and Barnabas had learnt this from apostles and taught it with

apostles. It was perhaps over this very edict which spawned *De pudicitia* that Tertullian broke from the Catholic Church and became a Montanist. This subject was a live issue in other areas also. In the Roman Church, Callistus argued against Hippolytus for the *corpus permixtum* nature of the Church on the basis of two main texts; the parable of the wheat and tares where the tares represent the sinners within the Church, and Noah's Ark, an obvious type of the Church (see 1 Peter 3.20-21), which contained both clean and unclean animals. (See Matthew 13.24f.; Genesis 7.8; Hippolytus, *Refutationis omnium haeresium* 9.12.22-23.)

In seeking to advance a scriptural defense of his assertion that adultery is a mortal sin, Tertullian urged Christians to consider the Decalogue. He saw adultery as fixed by Divine appointment between the obvious mortal sins of idolatry and murder. 'Enclosed by such flanks, encircled and supported by such ribs, who shall dislocate her from the corporate mass of coherencies, from the bond of neighbour crimes, from their embrace of kindred wickedness, so as to set apart her alone for the enjoyment of repentance?' (*De pudicitia* 5.) Convincing and important as this 'scriptural argument' was to Tertullian, it is interesting to note that the Divine order he writes of is based solely upon the Septuagint! In modern translations the command to refrain from adultery follows the command to refrain from committing murder.

There are several interesting examples of Tertullian's use of Scripture in justifying his espousal of a rigorist stance. The three 'lost parables' of Luke 15 which he had previously interpreted as supporting God's willingness to forgive all post-baptismal sin (See *De paenitentia* 8) are now interpreted as referring only to forgiveness of sin at conversion. In answer to the charge that Jesus forgave all sinners including fornicators and adulterers, Tertullian argued that such biblical examples concerned Jesus alone and at no time were similar powers extended to the Church. 'This is lawful to the Lord alone', he wrote (*De pudicitia* 11.) Similarly, the 'keys of the kingdom' conferred upon Peter are interpreted as a purely personal conferment. (Matthew 16:19; *De pudicitia* 21.)

A further Tertullian example of a scriptural text being stretched to fit a theological frame is that of the case of incest in Corinth (1 Corinthians 5.1-5.) Tertullian writes that the reason for Paul's injunction that this man be 'handed over to Satan' is that in the last day the Spirit may be saved (*De pudicitia* 13.) Significantly, Tertullian interprets this as referring, not to the spirit of the man, but rather to the Spirit in the Church which must be kept free of the contamination which such serious sin incurs. He cites lesser sins in Corinth, like arrogance, which could be dealt with when Paul arrived in person. Such interpretations provided a scriptural foundation for Tertullian's rigorist position.

CONCLUSION.

Tertullian's rigorist position on post-baptismal sin, although supported by Cyprian, ultimately lost out to the laxist theories of Stephen and Augustine. The four blessings of baptism as enunciated by Tertullian were no longer tied to the precise moment of water baptism. The gift of the Spirit was now understood to be received in the laying on of hands which followed baptism. This enabled Stephen and others to argue that 're-baptisms' were unnecessary as all baptisms could be valid (yet ineffective until 'confirmed' by a Catholic bishop.) Baptisms performed by schismatics and heretics required only the imposition of Catholic hands to convey the gift of the Spirit, (which alone resided within the Catholic Church). Tertullian's rigorist concept of the pure Church, the *ecclesia spiritus per spiritalem hominem, non ecclesiae numerus episcoporum* was superseded by a broader concept of the Church as a *corpus permixtum* containing both saints and sinners. Such an outcome was arguably inevitable given the fact that so many Christians lapsed in third and fourth-century persecutions. Such events surely contributed to laxist victory over rigorism.

Tertullian remains the most important Early Church witness to the struggle for an agreed system of discipline. No more and no less than any other patristic writer, he sought to be scriptural in his teaching. He appears to have been wholly unfamiliar with the genre of continuous biblical commentary.

preferring to use batteries of individual texts as ammunition against his opponents. The most potent side affect of his use of Scripture was that virtually any argument could be portrayed as 'scriptural'. The impression is strong that texts and partial texts were more often stretched to fit theories than vice versa. Tertullian's interpretations of the parables of the lost sheep, coin, and son in *De paenitentia* 8 and *De pudicitia* 7 are diametrically opposed to each other and provide the most obvious example of Scripture being moulded to suit theory. His scriptural interpretations are invariably subservient to his theories, reflecting practical and catechetical concerns. His main objective is always practical, to edify the faithful and ensure the spiritual health of the Church.

An understanding of the sacrament of baptism and the capability to deal with the problem of the Christian sinner were crucial aspects of the emergent development of the doctrine of the Church. In North Africa a combustible mixture of rigorism, persecution, martyrdom, enthusiasm, schism and dominant personalities fuelled the forward motion of the ecclesiological engine. In the writings of Tertullian and others, more often than not, this forward motion was upon hastily laid scriptural track.

L S. Kirkpatrick.

David Daniell: *William Tyndale: A Biography*. Yale University Press, 1994. £19.95, pp. x + 429, ISBN 0-300-06132-3.

The life and work of William Tyndale have been well recorded in this fine biography. He was born in Gloucestershire in 1494. His brother was steward of the Berkeley estate. He attended a school founded by the Dowager Lady Berkeley; there, he acquired a knowledge of the rudiments of Latin, Greek, German, French, Spanish and, possibly, Welsh. He had a facility in languages. His knowledge was vastly expanded when he went to Oxford University, at that time one of the finest universities in Europe. His studies were mostly in Latin. The library of Oxford University had 6,000 volumes but only 60 of these were in English. Here, he was also steeped in the art of rhetoric, the art of presenting a case so as to enlighten and convince. He was convinced that if the gospel was to be presented so as to enlighten and convince there would have to be a vernacular translation of the Bible. After graduation and ordination, he returned to Gloucestershire where he was shocked to find that the priests he met had only a scant knowledge of the contents of the Bible. He told one of them that 'if God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Bible than thou dost'.

Moreover, printing had now come on the scene and hundreds of copies could be produced. Further, Erasmus had produced his splendid edition of the Greek New Testament. This could be the basis for a good translation. Tyndale now applied his linguistic and rhetorical skills to producing such a translation. He went to London, hoping for the patronage of the scholarly Bishop Tunstall. This hope faded. A law was passed forbidding translations. Therefore, he felt he had to go to the continent to secure a printer from among the many who were producing Luther's works, including his great German translation of the New Testament. He found one in Worms; the first edition of his New Testament translation was published in 1526; it had 700 pages and a run of 3,600 copies. Only two survive, one of them being recently acquired by the British Library for £1,000,000. A number were burned in the campaign

against translations waged by the bishops, but many copies filtered into the country and were eagerly bought; some reached the counties north and west as well as London and other regions. Moreover, merchant seamen were ready to be involved in smuggling more copies into the country.

The linguistic accuracy of the translation was soon recognized and it remains as a noteworthy achievement of a very learned scholar; the rhetorical skills endowed it with memorable phraseology and notable readability. Tyndale recognized the need for a revision; he made hundreds of improvements for the 1634 edition; experts judge forty other amendments not to be improvements. Daniell rates the 1534 edition as the glory of Tyndale's work.

The repute of his work landed him in controversy. he was assailed in vitriolic terms by Sir Thomas More who said some of his controversial writings were 'a wellspring of wickedness'. Wolsey also attacked him. However, bitter attacks could not silence the truth of most of his arguments about the faults in the teaching and practice of the Church of Rome. Soon, he was being hunted by the authorities of Church and State.

Daniell takes issue with Dr. Eamon Duffy who in his massive *The Stripping of the Altars* holds that the Church was involved in producing portions of Scripture and would in due course have got round to producing further translations to accompany the reform already under way in the Church. Daniell holds that there is no evidence of a church-inspired reform at that time or that the Church was likely to produce vernacular translations of the whole Bible. Such translations as there were often

found I Books of Hours accompanied by meditations of the Virgin Mary which had no biblical foundation. A commission on reform was set up by Pope Paul III (1534-49); it did not report until 1537; its report led to little action. When the Council of Trent met in 1545 it adopted an even firmer affirmation of many of the doctrines to which Reformers took exception as having little or no biblical foundation.

Tyndale now turned to translate the Old Testament but he only completed the first five books and the Book of Jonah: here he

showed his mastery of style and of the Hebrew language. However, by now the net of his enemies was closing around him. He was betrayed by an Englishman, Henry Phillips, who wormed his way into Tyndale's confidence. He was arrested in 1535 and incarcerated in Vilvorde Castle, near Brussels; here he remained for one year and 135 days in squalid conditions. Unavailing efforts were made for his release. In August 1536 Tyndale was condemned by the Church and degraded from the priesthood and handed over to the state for sentence. He was condemned to be executed. Early in October he was strangled and then burned. Before the end, he is said to have cried, 'Lord, open the King of England's eyes'.

Within two years, permission was given for the printing and publishing of Bibles in English, and then it was ordered that a bible be placed in every parish church. The version so placed was largely indebted to Tyndale's translation. In the Authorised version of 1611, ninety percent of the New Testament is taken directly from Tyndale.

Tyndale did not live to see the full harvest of his work, but many of his words and phrases became part of the vocabulary and thought of English-speaking people for generations, even to the present day.

This biography is a very readable and scholarly work by an author who looks upon Tyndale as a fine hero of the faith; the story of his life, works, death and lasting influence is told with zest, admiration and respect and with many illuminating glimpses of persons, places and events.

R. Buick Knox.

David Butler, *Methodists and Papists, John Wesley and the Catholic Church in the Eighteenth Century*, London, Darton, Longman Todd, 1995.

David Butler's acceptance of criticism that his earlier publication on John Wesley for the Catholic Truth Society had been somewhat inaccurate in that he had chosen to highlight only the eirenical and ecumenical Wesley led him to set the record a little straighter with this new publication. His words were carefully chosen for he is clearly unwilling to endorse

Professor David Hempton's analysis that "Wesley's anti-Catholicism was one of his profound and enduring legacies to the Wesleyan connexion" [David Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society, 1750-1850*, London, Hutchinson, 1984, pp. 42-43]. Butler is more reserved and cautious in his criticism and is only prepared to concede, "It is embarrassing to realise just how wrong John Wesley was on the subject of Roman Catholicism and how prejudiced he was when he met it" [p. 202] or to go a little further when he examines Wesley's critique of Catholic practices, "Here Wesley has some very harsh things to say about Catholics" [p.159].

The crux of the issue centres on the question whether Wesley's attitude to the Roman Catholic Church simply reflected the intolerance of the age in which he lived or at times went beyond it. Both Hempton and Butler refer back to John Locke's seventeenth century work, *Letter Concerning Toleration* in which Locke argues for toleration with the exception of those who themselves are illiberal and thereby threaten the liberty of others. Butler suggests that Locke had given his high philosophical sanction to the traditional prejudice and ignorance against Catholics in England and created another block against the toleration of Catholics and their emancipation. However, while Butler carefully explains the background to Saville's Relief Act of 1778, which removed some of the earlier penalties and disabilities imposed on Catholics, he appears to absolve Wesley completely from any blame relating to the subsequent riots in London despite his public opposition to the Act and his indirect endorsement of Lord George Gordon's Protestant Association when writing to the Public Advertiser on 21 January 1780.

Butler's work is certainly comprehensive, scrutinising most of Wesley's works and references relating to Roman Catholics, and providing useful information on the conditions in which the Catholic Church existed in England in the eighteenth century. The chapters entitled "John Wesley and Richard Challoner"[ch. 6] and "A Caveat against Methodists"[ch. 7] offer new and interesting insights on the Vicar-Apostolic of the London District, even though one is left with the impression that

the author's own ecumenical commitment occasionally allows his imagination and scholarly analysis to stretch beyond the normal limits of credibility as, for example, when he surmises, "If they had met and understood each other properly, there might have emerged a consensus document on Justification from Catholics and Protestants between the bilateral talks at Regensburg in 1541 and the Anglican/Roman Catholic International Commission document, *Salvation and the Church* in 1987."

The author's statement that Wesley's eucharistic position is "explained in terms of transubstantiation" [p.97] is misleading. The comment is made in a study of Wesley's "A Roman Catechism faithfully drawn out of the allowed writings of the Church of Rome With a Reply thereto." Rather than supporting his analysis with a reference from this work he quotes instead an early letter to his father and mother. However, if Butler had used evidence from the work being considered he would have seen that Wesley here states his eucharistic doctrine in terms of Augustinian symbolism: "And after the same manner is the bread in the sacrament Christ's body that is, as circumcision was the covenant, and the lamb the passover, by signification and representation, by type and figure." And so the elements are called by the Fathers, 'the images,' [Orig.Dial. 3, Contra Marcion,] 'the symbols,' [Euseb. Dem. Evang.1.1,c.1,et.ult.,] 'the figure,' [Aug.contr. Adimant., c. 12,] 'of Christ's body and blood.' [Works, vol.X, p.119].

This is certainly not the final and definitive word on Wesley's attitude to the Roman Catholic Church but rather a useful contribution to this complex subject. It is perhaps an admission of the complex nature of Wesley, evident in various areas of his teaching, which is the most serious omission from Butler's work and which might have offered some explanation of his seemingly contradictory statements.

Dennis Cooke

C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Apostles' Creed*. T & T Clark, Edinburgh 1993. pp. 68, ISBN 0 567 29227 4

The Apostles' Creed has been well enough served by brief expositions in English. This one is the briefest of the brief.

running to a mere sixty eight pages. So in a measure it is a credo on the back of a credo. Whilst its author hopes it will be more widely useful, he has particularly in mind the needs of the pastor preparing people for confirmation and church membership.

This work blends exposition and defence simply, lucidly and fairly. Presumably few who use it will know that Charles Cranfield is one of the ablest exegetes of the New Testament in his generation. Nor will they realize that behind its pages lurks the thought of one of the greatest theologians of any generation, Karl Barth. Indeed, the use of Barth is responsible for the one point in the book where the author may mislead his readers. Cranfield says: 'But the Persons of the Trinity are not three separate individuals or selves. They are, rather, the three ways in which God exists, the three ways in which the one God is God.' (p.13). When Barth opted for this *Seinsweise*, he was able to explain that he was not a modalist. Beginners who are rightly alerted to the fact that the Fathers did not mean by ὑπόστασις or *persona* what we might mean by 'person', may nevertheless learn of modalism at some stage in their studies and think that Cranfield is advocating it.

There are two points at which an extra sentence or two of historical explanation would not be amiss. Firstly, the idea of God the Father 'Almighty' (*omnipotens*) in the creed is surely meant to capture the notion of παντοκράτωρ in Scripture, an idea rather different from what the English word and, in its historical development, the Latin word, convey. Secondly, although he alludes to its alternative meanings, Cranfield does not make clear that *communio sanctorum* has sometimes been taken as a reference to the eucharist. There is also one point at which the theological coherence of the Creed could have been exhibited so as to strengthen Cranfield's argument. He defends both the virgin birth and the physical resurrection of Jesus. If one wants to maintain this position in the course of an exposition of the Creed, it is surely apt to invoke the connection of both tenets with belief in God as Maker of heaven and earth.

Because of Cranfield's credentials as an exegete, those with a background in biblical studies would be interested to learn more at several points: whether he thinks that the Pauline

reference to 'the third day' (1 Corinthians 5:4) offers little support for the belief that Paul assumed the empty tomb (p.40); whether he takes Paul's 'except Christ and him crucified' (1 Corinthians 2.2) to mean 'except Christ crucified' (p.45); how he interprets the ἀδελφῶν of Matthew 25.40 (p.51). But the volume is barely intended for readers who might want to probe such questions. Because it not merely expounds, but also puts in a good word for, the Apostles' Creed, it will not receive universal welcome in the pluralistic ecclesiastical world of our day. Further, in relation to those who think otherwise, its persuasive power is somewhat limited by its brevity. However, these are not criticisms, for the author does not pretend to do more than he does. One is deeply grateful for this expression of Cranfield's continuing concern for the well-being of a Church he has served with such distinction over many decades.

Stephen N. Williams

Joel Marcus *The Way of the Lord*, Westminster/ John Knox Press ISBN 0-664-21949-7

Where are we going in Markan studies? Are we now to concentrate all our energies on the narrative flow of the gospel, noting Mark's techniques in skilful construction? Should we assume that his main interest is really in "discipleship"? Or is the heart of Mark to be found after all in his use of Christological titles?

While not unsympathetic to other lines of enquiry, and indeed seeking to incorporate them in his own methodology, Joel Marcus makes a good case for a return to the study of Christological titles, and in particular for a thorough examination of Mark's use of the Old Testament in relation to them. Such exegesis, however, was "forged in the fires of a warfare...both military and theological".

Marcus notes that there are five main features to his work.

The first, an obvious way in to the whole study, is concerned with 'the Markan passages in which Christological points are scored by means of references to Old Testament texts'. From there we move, secondly, to the redactional issue

of how far Mark has developed his own sources, a question which Marcus admits is full of methodological dangers, but which he is courageous enough to attempt.

The third feature is Marcus' attempt to be accountable to the whole of Mark's narrative. This he does by particular reference to the theme of 'The Way'.

Fourth, and perhaps most useful, is the examination of the early Jewish and Christian interpretation of Old Testament passages used by Mark. Once again Marcus stresses the need for caution, since we cannot assume that Mark knew anything about them and, as ever, we face the problem of written sources which post-date Mark himself, but Marcus makes a good case for their value in explaining otherwise puzzling gaps in the markan narrative.

The fifth emphasis is the life setting of Mark and his community. Marcus' own conviction is that Mark and his community were situated in the Roman province of Syria shortly before the fall of the Temple in AD. 70. In this situation there was particular tension between Jewish revolutionary groups on the one hand and the Jewish/Gentile Christians on the other. In short part of Mark's task is to take some of the scripture which "galvanized the anti-Roman revolutionaries" and use them "as testimonies to a different sort of holy war with different enemies and a different sort of Messiah as its standard bearer".

This is a well structured, well written and well argued book. Not everyone will agree with the life setting which Marcus proposes, and on which much of his exegesis is dependant. Nevertheless he produces much valuable material to aid the quest of how early Christians read their scriptures, and he uses his material with careful effect.

Donald P. Ker

Martin Kitchen, *Ephesians* (New Testament Readings). London and New York, Routledge, 1994. Pp.xi+147. £9.99.

This is not a commentary in the traditional sense of verse-by-verse exegesis but an attempt to open up Ephesians in a wider way and show its essential nature. Ephesians is one of the most difficult of the New Testament writings to corner and tame

for it does not make explicit the situation which led to its composition. Protestants have often regarded it as providing the essential Paul and Catholics, because of its concentration on the church, as important for their position. Kitchen finding, apart from its teaching on the church, a great deal of liturgical language in it, obviously takes the second approach. He assumes without detailed argument that it is post-Pauline and an attempt 'to vindicate the name of Paul as God's chosen instrument to bring the gospel to the Gentiles, especially in the light of his death' (p.129). It breathes the language of worship and prayer, indeed contains extensive passages of prayer. Kitchen goes too far however when he avers that the discussion of Christian armour in 6:10ff belongs to this area in that the 'standing' of the warrior indicates that the church is standing before God in worship; in so far as the epistle speaks of the proper attitude for worship it is that of the bent knee (3.14). All the paraenetic instruction in the letter prior to 6.10 had been directed towards individuals and the author gives no hint that at 6.10 he has moved to thinking of the instruction of the church as a corporate body. Kitchen is also over fond of finding references to baptism in the letter; only one is explicit, 4.5; probably 5.26 is another, but Kitchen understands it differently. Baptism was clearly a significant event in the life of every believer and so it is inevitable that references to it should underly sections in the letter; but the moment Christians first came to believe was also equally significant and where he sees baptism others may see conversion.

Despite these criticisms Kitchen's approach succeeds in offering a penetrating insight into the letter. He correctly realises that it was not the author's purpose to write a tract encouraging readers to embark on evangelisation; the author has little interest in the world outside the church. He also recognizes that for the author the three last paraenetic chapters are linked closely to the first three more theological chapters and are as significant. Kitchen writes correctly that 'to a greater extent than in any of Paul's own letters, Ephesians 4-6 is a structured piece of moral exhortation' (p.71), and that just as unity was the theme of the

first three chapters it is also 'the central focus of the ethic of this epistle' (p.79).

His views have been formed after admirably wide reading of the secondary literature, not only commentaries on the letter but also on the relation of theology to literature and despite being occupied with general work in a diocese he has kept himself up-to-date. Several of the items in the bibliography are dated 1993! It is therefore surprising to discover that he has not used Lincoln's major commentary (Word Biblical Commentaries, 1990) and is unaware that Schnackenburg's equally important commentary has been translated into English (T.& T. Clark, 1991). These should be noted and used by those whom Kitchen rightly excites to explore further in the letter.

Ernest Best.

